

PRO-LINK STATEMENT TO THE IOW TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE TASK-FORCE -23 SEPT 2016

(There are items in this statement that are confidential at the present time).

The PRO-LINK ethos is to facilitate a means whereby islanders have a similar freedom of access to the opportunities and aspirations that others enjoy on mainland Britain.

While respecting that throughout the islands history, the uniqueness of being a substantial population "cut off" from the evolution of progress has been considered a blessing for some, the time has now come to change its path into the future.

Ferry crossing schedules have been severely reduced over the recent years and fares have increased to the extent whereby the combination provides an unaffordable barrier for those on an average island wage, to venture off the island. This barrier has now in the 21st century, caused a continuing spiral of socio-economic deprivation while the surrounding South East mainland enjoys vibrant success and investment.

PRO-LINK believes that with the natural topographical advantages of continuing to be surrounded by a stunning coastline, along with beautiful countryside – with easy and reliable access to it, the Isle of Wight will become the most desirable place in Britain to live, visit and perform business. The Isle of Wight can be given the opportunity to be successful.

WHY IS THERE A SERIOUS LACK OF INWARD BUSINESS INVESTMENT COMING TO THE ISLAND?

Some of the reasons concerning inefficient cross Solent transport:

S1 - The privately owned and unregulated ferry companies control all cross Solent travel, they expose new business start ups and present island businesses to variable and unregulated transport costs.

S2 - The unregulated ferry companies have total power, control and influence over any institution or business (mainland or island based) that requires cross Solent transport...this has a serious detrimental effect on business strategy and planning autonomy.

S3 - The outdated method of unreliable, scheduled and time consuming cross-Solent ferry crossings, dissuades businesses from investing either initially or further on the island. The inefficient and slow sole ferry option causes wasted valuable time and expenditure, on unproductive hours. On average, a return vehicle journey consumes four hours of unproductive time plus administration booking procedures.

S4 -The small population catchment area of the Isle of Wight, created by isolation from the British mainland dissuades consumer, entertainment and retail businesses from investment on the island.

S5 - The extra fare expense and paid labour time to manoeuvre personnel across the Solent dissuades large company start-ups or reinvestment on the island.

S6 - The prolonged time and extra variable expense for deliveries of base materials to the island and then finished products off the island, dissuades manufacturing businesses from investing on the island.

S7 - Many hotels in traditional IOW tourist locations have become dilapidated due to lack of reinvestment. Owners have been reluctant to upgrade knowing that the return customer yield required to do this will not be forthcoming. Many have resorted to residential change of use.

THE FIXED LINK once opened, will offer the solutions to these present drawbacks to businesses and institutions. A 24-hour, 365 days of the year road based 5-10 minute transport option, will allow island businesses to compete in the wider country and world market.

Businesses in the 21st century need to have access to fast and reliable transportation of goods, personnel and customers in order to compete with those that have.... or they cannot succeed.

WHAT ARE THE GAINS ENVISAGED WITH FAST AND REASONABLY PRICED 24 HOUR ACCESS TO AND FROM THE ISLAND?

- G1 - Increased business and tourism inward investment.
- G2 - The ability for island residents to commute easily and cheaply.
- G3 - Island businesses to compete in a higher catchment area.
- G4 - To facilitate average Island wage parity with South East England. (Presently around 24% lower on the island). An estimated boost to island overall household income of over £500million per annum, with the boost to the local economy that brings. (80,000 working age population X £7k -£8k disparity = £560million - £640million increase)
- G5 - A boost to "career opportunity" island employment, through inward investment.
- G6 - A boost to IOW Council revenue through less subsidising of council tax and business tax, via higher island wages.
- G7 - The redevelopment of East Cowes waterfront ferry marshalling areas to provide facilities for locals, business/housing and tourism.
- G8 - The redevelopment of Southampton Red Funnel waterfront ferry marshalling areas to provide facilities for locals, business/housing and

tourism.

- G9 - The redevelopment of Fishbourne waterfront ferry marshalling areas to provide facilities for locals, business/housing and tourism.
- G9 - The redevelopment of Portsmouth waterfront ferry marshalling areas to provide facilities for locals, business/housing and tourism.
- G10 - The avoidance of the potential emission charge that may be introduced, charging a levy to vehicles entering Portsmouth and Southampton city centres.
- G11 - The avoidance of traffic surges associated with ferry disembarkation in Southampton, Portsmouth, Fishbourne and East Cowes.
- G12 - The avoidance of traffic gridlock in areas of vehicle marshalling when ferries become delayed or cancelled.
- G13 - The provision of reliable, fast and immediate, no toll charge transportation of trauma patients to specialist mainland hospital departments including other emergency services.
- G14 - The fast and efficient utilisation of ambulances with staff, (consultants, doctors, etc.) operating between the island and mainland hospitals.
- G15 - The reduced requirement to use expensive emergency helicopter flights for trauma victims.
- G16 - The quick response of back up police, firearms, bomb squad, immigration services from the mainland.
- G17 - The attraction of high skill set personnel including teachers, doctors, GP's, consultants, industry specialists etc. who will not need to worry about the islands present day isolation; Thus avoiding the worry of career "dead ends".
- G18 - Social wellbeing for many who feel unable at present to visit mainland family and friends and visa versa, due to the burden of expense and problematic logistics caused by ferry unreliability and restrictive timetables.
- G19 - An opportunity to contractually obligate a provider of a fixed link to provide funding for island transport infrastructure at construction stage, also to provide a small percentage funding from future tolls to provide ongoing input to the islands public facilities. The contractual

obligations will need to include terms and conditions of future toll pricing to block increases that are not in line with normal rates of CPI.

- G20 - Further education prospects will be enhanced for those wishing to attend mainland colleges and universities. By the same token, the idea of setting up of an IOW University may be easier to fulfill, with the opportunity of equal access for mainland students.
- G20 - Sports careers will be enhanced by the ability of mainland participants, teams, trainers and coaches to quickly and reliably visit the island. Island teams and participants (children and adult) will also be able to compete and train on the mainland without the arduous and energy sapping ferry journey. The current climate of sponsorship of travel for island teams is limited. The availability for discounted travel for mainland teams to visit the island is non-existent. The option to use a fixed link would allow participants to arrange fixtures without the burden of financial and logistical encumbrances.
- G21 - The gifted and talented will be able to remain on the island while still having the ability to pursue aspirational careers.

VISION –

- V1 - PRO-LINK's vision is to obtain for all IOW residents, businesses and Island visitors a radical new choice to use regulated travel across the Solent, using personal vehicles or public transport.
- V2 – To provide vastly improved, economic travel, efficient in speed, time and reliability, 24 hours a day throughout the whole year at fixed prices by road link travel.
- V3 - We anticipate this crossing will be approximately four miles long with a crossing time of about six minutes - compared to an average minimum crossing time by ferry (including waiting time, embarkation and disembarkation time) totaling around 1.5 hours.
- V4 - Both of the above will enable vastly improved connectivity between the Island and Mainland which will:

V4.1 - Enable the aims of the Solent LEP to be more efficiently achieved.

V4.2 - Enable the formation and economic benefits of a Combined Solent Authority to also be achieved.

V4.3 - Enable better and more efficient use of resources, land and industry within the region.

V4.4 - Enable island resident working people to commute to South Hampshire to higher quality and better-paid jobs.

V4.5 - Lead to more investment in the Region as a whole, specifically on the Island providing better year round job security.

V4.6 - Help ensure the supply of material goods and services on to the island and the dispatch of products off the island, are more reliably, efficiently & economically provided.

V4.7 - Will better support and secure the "No.1 Island Industry", encouraging more tourism and visitors.

V4.8 - Will provide adequate future cross Solent transport for an increasing population.

- V5 - We anticipate that:

V5.1 - Obligated island resident and business discounted tolls and island "electoral register" only permits, will be pre-contracted and regulated in to the management system.

V5.2 - Due to visual/noise impact, shipping/siting considerations and geological/maintenance concerns, we consider the crossing should be not be in the form of a bridge.

V5.3 - Due to the undulation of the Solent seabed, the strong tidal stream nature, the sensitivity of the Solent waters environment and the length of the tunnel required, we consider the tunnel should not be an immersed tube tunnel.

V5.4 - Due to the comparatively small environmental impact of boring a tunnel and the lengths suggested, a cross Solent bored tunnel system is preferable.

- V6 - PRO-LINK understand that as this development will be an extension of the UK Road System, it would be adopted as such and will be carried out under the authority & terms of the UK Department for Transport.
- V7 - As soon as the project is confirmed to go ahead, strategic investments will start pouring into the Island to prepare it for its future prosperity.
- V8 - PRO-LINK believes that all existing passenger ferry services including Hovercraft and also the Yarmouth-Lymington vehicle ferry

will continue to operate viably alongside the Fixed Link Tunnel, as they will not be working in direct competition. A management amalgamation of the Yarmouth to Lymington vehicle ferry route with the fixed link, to allow bookings from the same web site at the same time along with access to accommodation bookings, should enhance its use. Positioning the IOW Fixed Link Portal at East Wight, will keep the Yarmouth-Lymington Ferry away from the competition of the Link. It is thought that this most scenic of crossings will flourish due to the uniqueness and faster crossing time of this West Wight route. This route will serve well the "rural" tourist industry in West Wight and also any traffic that wishes to head West. It will be possible for tourist visitors to the island to choose between arriving by ferry or fixed link. It will give an opportunity to perhaps arrive by ferry and leave by tunnel or visa versa.

- It is expected that the Wightlink Fishbourne-Portsmouth vehicle ferry route and the East Cowes-Southampton vehicle ferry route will be unable to compete with both the pricing and speed of Solent crossing within such a close proximity. It is therefore expected that these routes will cease.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The attached spreadsheet of predicted traffic flow, suggests a doubling of the present day average total ferry vehicle movements between the mainland and island from 5,700 units to just under 12,000 per day including HGVs. To control and manage the increase in traffic flow on the island when the fixed link tunnel is opened, the traffic management remedies proposed are:

- **TM1 - The construction of a Medina vehicle crossing.** Included in the Fixed Link "Package" will be included a "Medina vehicle Crossing" (most likely, a bridge). The location required will be from Fairlee Road mid-way between Newport and Whippingham, to cross the River Medina towards Stag Lane. A connecting contraflow road would be required to be constructed on Eastern side from Fairlee Road. A small connecting contraflow connection on the Western side will also be required to Stag Lane. In order to pay for this infrastructure capital, it may be necessary to make a small "crossing charge" for each vehicle. Cyclists and pedestrians would be free. Once the capital has been paid off (expected 15-30 years), the crossing fee would no longer be necessary. The charge would need to be assessed. This crossing will alleviate much of the North West to North East traffic and visa versa that presently causes traffic problems at Coppins Bridge in Newport that subsequently can bring the area to gridlock. It is considered that the benefits to the IOW economy of this crossing will be enormous.

- **TM2 – The construction of an East to West Cowes Pedestrian Subway.**
At present, the infrequent and sporadic timing of the “floating bridge” which connects East Cowes to West Cowes for both vehicle and pedestrian crossings causes a bottleneck of traffic. At around midnight each day, this (charged for) service ceases to operate till around 6am. During this time anyone wishing to cross the River must journey some eight miles or so to cross a distance of 200 metres. The construction of a **one-piece immersed tube pedestrian subway** at this location will replace the floating bridge at East Cowes, offering an immediate 24-hour availability of crossing. This will create opportunities for East Cowes to become as successful as its neighbour to the West including 24-hour access to the Red Jet “high speed” option of crossing the Solent to Southampton.
- Both TM1 and TM2 will have an initial charge rate of use until the capital outlay is paid. The two Medina crossings have no need to be staffed even at the initial toll charge stage, as automation will be simple to implement.
- TM3 - The fixed link tunnel will offer concessionary rates if used between the hours of 2am to 5am.
- TM4 – Heavy goods vehicles will be surcharged if using the tunnel at busy commuter times of 06.30 – 09.30hrs and 16.30 – 18.30hrs.
- TM5 - Islander first homeowner only annual permits (on the IOW electoral register) will be offered at a rate not exceeding £2,000 for a standard family car. This will give two return journeys per day usage for those wishing to commute. This will allow vehicles to exit from the island while visitors enter, maintaining a balanced flow of traffic. Two types of permits can be offered – a full permit at £2,000 or a discounted permit, which will only allow crossings out of commuter hours similar to TM4. This should help “spread” the traffic to avoid surges.
- TM6 - The Island will be annexed as a peninsula. Therefore traffic will not be entering the island to go elsewhere which would otherwise cause through traffic problems in other areas.
- TM7 - During “peak tourist periods”, which will be stated in advance, a higher toll tariff will be employed to vehicles that are not registered as island based vehicles. This higher toll will be waived only if the vehicle owner has registered a “pre-paid accommodation booking” on the island. A web site based medium that island accommodation providers will need to register to, will discount the toll to a normal rate. This

way, only those who have proven legitimate tourist related reasons to visit the island will pay the lower rate. Anyone else has two options: A/ pay the higher toll rate or B/ catch the bus through the tunnel, to continue on their journey by bus or be picked up by alternative transport, at the bus drop off point.

- TM8 - Bus or taxi travel (most likely electrically powered at that stage) direct from major IOW towns to either Fareham train station, London, Eastleigh airport, Southampton, Portsmouth, etc. will offer a chance for people to leave their own vehicles at home. This will avoid the parking congestion that commuters cause at present, near ferry terminals on both the island and mainland. This increased electric bus activity will also make the island bus company viable to again provide public transport infrastructure to the villages that have had their bus routes removed. As more services are provided, more people will use the public transport buses, which will remove the single driver vehicles from the roads. With more people using the buses, fare prices will be liable to decrease. A license will be able to be bid for, with which to operate the service through the tunnel to incorporate pledged routes on the island.
- TM9 - Only businesses registered as island based, will be offered annual permits. The prices will depend on the size of vehicles. This will allow island business vehicles to exit the island on essential business, while non-island business vehicles will be subject to standard priced return toll charges.
- TM10 – “Automatic Number Plate Recognition” (ANPR) systems, combined with CCTV, car transmitters and on-line payments will create a seamless journey across the Solent, with no reason to stop the vehicle. (Similar to London congestion charge).

THE POSITIONING – (Location options plan attached)

- P1 - The above will be achieved by provision of two dual carriageway road tunnels each way under the Solent, to include safety provisions and suitable ventilation/service ducting.
- P2 - Suitable links from the mainland portal to the M27 east of Junction 9 will be required. The recently approved “Stubington Bypass” may be a possible option for utilisation. The mainland portal ideally will be inland near the M27, however the added length of tunnel may render this option financially unviable. (Further research and studies of these options is required with regard to mainland infrastructure.)
- P3 - The Island portal is ideally within the Whippingham area. There

will be a requirement to create a new access from the A3054 Ryde Road at Lushington Hill and substantial improvements to Park, Briddlesford & Downend Roads providing a new south/central distribution route linking to the A3055 Newport to Sandown Road. Alternatively a new connective road could be constructed.

- P4 - 85% of the islands resident population lives to the East of the West of West Cowes, when a line from that area is drawn North to South. To avoid unwarranted excessive traffic movements across the island to reach the Fixed Link Portal, the necessary positioning will be required where existing highest population areas already exist, but where space allows the construction of the Portal and infrastructure. In order to fund the construction of the Fixed Link, investors will require the yield versus capital outlay to be viable. An East Wight Portal will allow a connection towards the closest mainland options of the "Lee on Solent", "Browndown" or if capital funds allow...further towards the M27. A mainland portal at any of these locations will allow the transfer of the predominant South East traffic. The newly agreed "Stubington Bypass" could as aforementioned, be upgraded or modified to account for extra traffic flow.
- P5 –Present day sporadic traffic surges within Portsmouth and Southampton city centres associated with the arrival and disembarkation of vehicle ferries, is not popular with the City authorities. Vehicles arriving in the City marshalling areas and beyond, either to embark or disembark, predominantly pass through the City with no economic value to the area. It is considered that both Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils would help mitigate some of the costs to improve the mainland portal infrastructure to the M27, if doing this would assist the reduction of traffic surging in their cities in the future. The Cities would also be able to redevelop the vehicle ferry ports in to better-used waterfront facilities.

THE ECONOMIC CASE TO BUILD AND MANAGE

An approximation:

Tunnel

- B1 –The toll revenue from the route mentioned is estimated at £180million per annum with operational overheads of £5million to £10million (depending on build length, etc) = £170million to £175million profit.

This constitutes an approximate yield of 95% overall minus leverage costs.

The main tangible item (the Tunnel) is guaranteed for 150 years with guaranteed income for perpetuity.

The cost to build the tunnels/infrastructure is assessed by experts at £1.2billion < 30% >.

Leverage costs @5% = £60million per annum.

£170million profit minus £60million leverage costs = £110million profit.

£40million average leverage costs (two thirds of final cost leverage) x 10 years of construction = £400million.

£1.2billion construction costs plus £400million leverage = £1.6 billion to build.

£1.6billion leverage costs @ 5% = £80million per annum.

£170million profit minus £80million leverage = £90million.

Therefore the estimation of project "payback" is over a period of:

£1.6billion divide by £90million profit per annum = 17.8 years.

Ferries

- B2 - The existing combined revenue of Red Funnel and Wightlink including passenger ferries is approximately £105million per annum with £80million overheads = £25million combined profit.
- This constitutes an approximate yield of 24% (including leverage costs we believe, but this needs to be confirmed).

Tangible items are devaluing (the ferries), requiring replacement every 15-20 years.

The ferry companies have massive overheads via an outdated system of labour and maintenance intensive transport to cross a short distance of water. A Fixed Link Road based tunnel has fewer overheads, especially using new technology.

THE ENVIROMENT

The Tunnel

- TE1 – Bored tunnels will not interfere with the Solent seabed.
- TE2 – Construction excavation spoils can be used to infill and reclaim land, or be deposited in the English Channel causing no harm.
- TE3 - The tunnel portals can be unobtrusive.
- TE4 – The tunnel will be powered by clean electric energy with low energy lighting and ventilation.
- TE5 – The tunnel will provide conduits for island generated solar/tidal power.
- TE6 – The tunnel will facilitate the use of driverless electric cars for transport across the Solent in the future.
- TE7 – The tunnel will facilitate the use of electric buses for public transport across the Solent.
- TE8 – Automation avoids requirements for vehicles to stop, saving energy through efficiency of momentum.

The Ferries.

- FE1 – Fossil Fuels are required to generate propulsion and electricity. Modern ferries can now be hybrid, but will still require fossil fuel power.
- FE2 – Lack of fluid motion with extended stationary periods in dock, wastes energy while not providing transport.
- FE3 – Large administration and ticketing buildings waste energy.
- FE4 - Slow moving and stationary waiting vehicles embarking and disembarking, use energy inefficiently.
- FE5 – Ferries are often only partially utilised or even empty when crossing the Solent, causing energy to be wasted needlessly.

THE ISLAND ECONOMY

Pro-Link believes the island economy will be boosted by a fixed link in many ways.

Initially, as the project becomes part of the Solent Transport Infrastructure Plan, we believe:

- E1 – Strategic inward investment into business start-ups, plans for tourist attractions, hotel upgrades and new builds, etc. are expected to be forthcoming even before tunnel construction begins.
- E2 – Inadvertent but valuable Isle of Wight destination promotional advertising, will occur through the worldwide media attention that this project will receive.

Secondly as the construction starts:

- E3 - Housing will be required for the workers, along with peripheral eateries, shops, etc. the construction will continue for perhaps 5-7 years, providing employment to local labour also. Continued inward investment along with the building of the planned Hotels and businesses to have them realised as the tunnel opens will create a construction boon.

After the tunnel opens, the new ease of cross Solent transport is expected to create the foundations for a vibrant economy of business and tourism:

- E4 - The unique 55 miles of coastline with its 27 beaches, will provide the unusual criteria to make the Isle of Wight a mecca for watersports activities, now that enthusiasts are able to access the area and equipment businesses, that will have been prepared during the tunnel construction years.
- E5 – The easy commuter access will help bring Island resident average wage from the £18,000 per annum to parity of the £25,000 South East average. The 80,000 working age population will have a chance to lift the input of the extra average wage, into the island economy by over £500million per annum.
- E6 - Island Technology and other businesses will be able to expand by attracting high skill set employees that are at present reluctant to locate on to an isolated island.
- E7 – Extra footfall numbers through the towns and villages will facilitate viable shops, restaurants, bars and clubs.
- E8 – The burdensome expensive “tax by ferry fare” for island residents to leave and return to the island will be removed.

CONCLUSION

C1 - PRO-LINK believe that the contents of this statement show beyond reasonable doubt the massive potential that a Cross Solent tunnel road link will have for the future socio-economic prosperity, lifestyle and standard of living on the Isle of Wight.

After proper examination of our statement, we believe the Transport Infrastructure Task Force will have a responsibility and duty of care, to press the case to the IOW Council to formally request the Department for Transport to commission an updated and thorough IOW Fixed Link Feasibility Study and if possible, to planning application stages.

We believe the new study will enable a proper informed debate to take place throughout the Solent for those who will be affected.

We have included in the statement, attached copies of:

- L1 – A letter from the DfT dated 7th October 2014 in reply to Kevin Price who asked why there is no Fixed Link to the Isle of Wight?

The response included statements from Akwasi Mensah:

“The Government recognises the importance of investment in transport infrastructure to support economic growth.”

And:

“there has never been a formal application for Department for transport funding, for a fixed link bridge or tunnel either from the isle of Wight Council or the Solent LEP.”

And concerning the ferries:

“The setting of fare rates for residents is a matter for the operator of the service, as a private company. It would not be appropriate for Central Government to legislate a rate of fare which could make the service less able to adapt to changing circumstances”.

- L2 – Letter to Christopher Dodd from James Sharples of the DfT dated 13th January 2015.

This letter explains that the IOW Council and the Solent LEP are to make the decision regarding an IOW Fixed Link.

- L3 – Letter to Andrew Turner – MP. From Robert Goodwill – The Department for Transport. Dated 12th February 2015.

This letter again explains that:

“Currently the Solent LEP Growth Deal does not include any plans for a fixed link. No formal application for a fixed link has ever been received by the Department for Transport and consequently the value for money case has not been made.”

- L4 – A letter to Andrew Turner - MP. From Andrew Jones – Parliamentary Under secretary of State. Dated 13th July 2015.

This letter explains:

“It is now for the Isle of Wight Council or the Local Enterprise Partnership to consider whether, and from what source, to fund feasibility work associated with a fixed link”.

- L5.1 to L5.3 are the explanation sheets to:
- L5.4 – “Spreadsheet of Traffic flow and revenue forecast”. This is sent to you as a separate attachment.



Department
for Transport

LI

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
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SW1P 4DR
Tel: 0300 330 3000

Web Site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: 115471
Your Ref: N/A

DATE: 7th OCTOBER 2014

Dear Kevin Price,

FIXED LINK BRIDGE/TUNNEL TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Thank you for your e-mail of 10th September on the issue of a fixed link bridge or tunnel to the Isle of Wight from the mainland.

This Government recognises the importance of investment in transport infrastructure to support economic growth. ←

As part of this, Government has announced plans to create a Local Growth Fund from 2015/16 which is being devolved to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's) and will incorporate all funding for local major transport schemes, including schemes like the one you suggest. There is over £6 billion of transport funding in the fund up to 2020/21. ←

The Solent LEP has secured £124.8m from the Government's Local Growth Fund (LGF) to support economic growth in the area – with £27.5m of new funding confirmed for 2015/16 and £57.7m for 2016/17 to 2021. ←

I am given to understand that there has never been a formal application for Department for Transport (DfT) funding, for a fixed link bridge or tunnel either from the Isle of Wight Council or the Solent LEP. ←

Further rounds of the LGF are planned and it will be for local partners to determine which transport improvements are priorities for their areas. If you have not done so you may wish to make representations to the Isle of Wight Council or Solent LEP.

I appreciate that there will be significant debate on the merits and disbenefits of such a scheme locally. I can understand your concerns about the cost of travel to and from the island and the particular impact on those with low incomes.

The ferry services are run by commercial businesses which must ensure that the services are viable to continue their operations. The setting of fare rates for residents is a matter for the operator of the service, as a private commercial company. It would not be appropriate

for Central Government to legislate a rate of fare which could make the service less able to adapt to changing circumstances.

In the recently announced Growth Deals negotiated by the Solent LEP, Central Government have agreed to allocate £15m to support Red Funnel, Isle of Wight and Southampton Councils to improve the efficiency of the ferry service.

I hope that the options to approach the Council and LEP about the benefits of promoting a fixed link scheme, and lobby the Council to work with the ferry operator to find an acceptable rate for residents and the company, provides you with some avenues to explore.

I am sorry that I cannot be more helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Akwasi Mensah

LI



Department
for Transport

L2

Department for Transport
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Tel: 0300 330 3000

Web Site: www.gov.uk/dft

13 January 2015

Dear Christopher Dodd

FOI Request Case Reference Number F0013159

Thank you for your information request of 14 December 2015. You requested the following information:

1. In a letter from John Hayes dated 24 Mar 2015 to my MP Andrew Turner he suggests the Local Highway Authority should be contacted with regard to 'support' for the support work in connection with a fixed link proposal. As the IOW highways are now all in the hands of a PFI initiative can you please confirm the name and contact details of the appropriate body and its chief officer with whom I should make contact regarding a road/tunnel proposition from the IOW to the mainland?
2. For the same proposal with which Authority should I make contact for a fixed link road (trench tunnel) under the Solent from the IOW to the UK mainland?
3. Will such a proposal actually be considered by the Solent LEP/Growth Fund or will it have to be considered as part of the National Infrastructure Pipeline/Schedule?

Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am writing to confirm that the Department for Transport has now completed its search for the information.

The information you have requested is below in the form of responses to your questions as stated above.

1. A proposal for a new fixed link road tunnel would not be in scope of the Isle of Wight Highways PFI (Island Roads). Transport planning, the development of the Local Transport Plan and transport strategy remain the responsibility of the Isle of Wight Council: www.iwight.com/Residents/Transport-Parking-and-Streets/Highways-PFI/Scope-of-the-Highways-PFI. The Council's chief officer is their Chief Executive: John Metcalfe, County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1UD.
2. The appropriate authority is the local highway authority, in this case the Isle of Wight Council.
3. In the first instance it is for the Isle of Wight Council and the Solent LEP to decide if a fixed link proposal fits with their strategic priorities. The National Infrastructure Plan is a strategic overview of the level of planned infrastructure investment. It is not a statement of need or a commitment to undertake all of the projects shown. The

publicly funded elements of the infrastructure pipeline represents announced projects.

It has been made clear previously that the Department will not enter into any further correspondence with you on the subject of a fixed link as it is a matter for the Isle of Wight Council and the Solent LEP in the first instance. This includes further questions under the Freedom of Information Act where the Department has already issued you a response. Please also be aware that the Freedom of Information Act provides the right of access to specific information and documentation held by public authorities, rather than general questions of policy or statements of opinion.

If you are unhappy with the way the Department has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to the Department's FOI Advice Team at:

Zone D/04
Ashdown House
Sedlescombe Road North
Hastings
East Sussex TN37 7GA
E-mail: FOI-Advice-Team-DFT@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Please send or copy any follow-up correspondence relating to this request to the FOI Advice Team to help ensure that it receives prompt attention. Please also remember to quote the reference number at the beginning of this letter in any future communications.

Please see attached details of DfT's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,

James Sharples

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L2

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Our Ref: MC/126824
Your Ref: AJT/LG/Dodd C/43

L3

12 FEB 2015

Dear Andrew.

Thank you for your letter of 13 January to Patrick McLoughlin, enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Christopher Dodd of 28 Sea Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, about the fixed link proposal on the Isle of Wight. I am replying as Minister responsible for local roads.

This Government recognises the importance of investing in infrastructure to support economic growth. One of the ways we are investing in local economies over the next six years is through the Local Growth Fund (LGF) that has been established from 2015/16 onwards.

The decision to build the Skye Bridge was made by the Scotland Office in 1989. As you will be aware, decisions on priorities for infrastructure to support local economic growth in England now are made by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) through their Growth Deals. LEPs can seek freedoms, flexibilities and influence over resources from Government and a share of the LGF to target their identified growth priorities. This allows real decision making at a local level by local partners who best know the solutions to their barriers for growth.

The Solent LEP, which among others includes the Isle of Wight, has already secured £125m funding from the LGF to support their current, pre-identified priority schemes, which include transport schemes in the wider Solent area. Currently the Solent LEP Growth Deal does not include any plans for a fixed link. No formal application for a fixed link has ever been received by the Department for Transport (DfT) and consequently the value for money case has not been made.

With my Ministerial colleague, John Hayes, I support the establishment of a task force to consider the long-term transport needs of the island's residents and visitors. The terms of reference for the task force will be established later this year and its work will allow for opportunities to be fully investigated.



ROBERT GOODWILL

L4

RE
1

**Department
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Your Ref: AJT/KH/DoddC/46

13 JUL 201

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 4 June to George Osborne, enclosing
correspondence from your constituent,
Isle of Wight, about an Isle of Wight fixed link. Your
letter has been passed to this Department and I am replying as Minister
responsible for local transport.

I know my officials have corresponded with you on this issue previously. As
you are aware, the Isle of Wight Council is currently in the process of
establishing an Isle of Wight Task Group to ensure that transport services are
affordable, secure and accessible. Its work will allow for a cohesive
examination of the Island's transport problems and potential solutions. The
Government supports the creation of this Task Group. It is now for the Isle
of Wight Council or the Local Enterprise Partnership to consider whether, and
from what source, to fund feasibility work associated with a fixed link.

I look forward to hearing about the progress of the Task Group.

Yours,



ANDREW JONES

L5.1

A guide to potential Fixed Link income.

Proposed route: Whippingham area (IOW) to inland of Lee-on-Solent area (mainland).
Tunnel construction to be approx. four miles of twin bored, dual carriageway to span the Solent from Whippingham.

Traffic management.

As explained in the 'PRO-LINK STATEMENT TO THE IOW TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE TASK-FORCE -23 SEPT 2016" TM1 to TM10.

Utilities and communications will have conduits through the tunnel.
Charges to the relevant companies will be made for this provision.
Expert assessment for these individual charges is required.

Transfer buses via the Southern Vectis island bus company.
Yearly contract to transfer passengers through the tunnel from island towns to selected mainland routes. Island public transport and rural location services will be revitalised, at that time theoretically using electrically powered vehicles. **£3million.**

Tolls will be assisted by incorporating automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology along with pre-registered credit/debit payments systems similar to the London congestion charge.
It will be encouraged to use this mode of payment to enable fluid traffic management.
A separate booth for cash sales will incur increased toll payments by 10%.

Permits

In all cases, annual permits will be offered to only to genuine island residents and island businesses to allow the exit of vehicles from the island more often. Application criteria will be required.

Standard commuter 12 month permit to travel at will with a standard vehicle that is nominated, any time of the year, any time of the day, for up to 2 return journeys per day. **£2,000 p/a.**

Taxis will have a different permit with unlimited crossings. **£3,000 p/a**

Minibuses up to 12 seats with up to two crossings per day. **£3,500 p/a**

L5.2

Horseboxes, motorhomes, and caravans to allow one return crossing per day. **£1,500 p/a**

HGVs (permit- 2 returns per day) Island registered vehicles from island registered businesses receive 50% discount to the individual crossing prices below:

Up to **3 tons** inc' commercially rated SUVs **£2000** or **£30** each way.

Up to **7 tons**. 1yr permit **£4000** or **£70** each way

Up to **10 tons**. **£6,000** or **£90**

Up to **15 tons**. **£9,000** or **£120**

15 tons and above **£12,000** or **£140**

Individual crossings tolls

Individual islander crossings for Island residents with a nominated Island registered standard vehicle. (Without a permit) **£10** each way all year

Individual non-islander crossings for standard vehicles not registered on the Island cannot have permits (to limit traffic on to the island). **£20** each way low season. **£30** each way high season.

Horseboxes, motorhomes, caravans, and minibuses. £40 each way. Island registered vehicles will receive 50% discounts on these tolls.

Coaches will not be able to gain islander permits.

This is to prevent unfair competition to the contract holder for island/mainland transfer buses.

Low season **£90** each way. High season and Bestival (Sept) **£150** each way.

Island based businesses island registered coaches will attract a 50% discount to these rates.

These rates sound fair when compared to the present day ferry charges.

For instance, an HGV is charged at £560 return as standard by Wightlink and often have no availability especially at weekends to the detriment of business.

The tolls are cheaper than the ferries and offer no restricted freedom of movement which will build the economy and improved lifestyle.

General running costs of an automated toll Tunnel are small once build is completed, especially when compared to ferry businesses. £5million per year is an estimation but more expert analysis will be required depending on final structure.

We believe Government favour these types of projects. Many people employed to design and build

L5.3

the link who pay tax, many materials used (vat), tolls with minimal overheads and a booming Island economy with private investment and uplift in wages, that has less unemployment, more businesses and tourists spending money. A portion of the tolls could be used to improve Island Infrastructure, roads, clean beaches, cut grass verges, etc. which will ease the local council responsibilities.

Just Wightlink employs 600-750 staff (£10-£12million per annum in wages alone).

Add fuel, depreciation, maintenance, pensions, regulatory coding, etc..... very inefficient. A Fixed Link has very few overheads as registration plate recognition technology is mainly used which is combined with credit/debit card pre-registration, similar to the London Congestion charge.

This allows far cheaper tolls in comparison to ferry fares while still making an excellent and attractive yield for private investors and Government.

These estimations are averaged over the year (summer, Bestival, festival, winter). Last year roughly 2.1 million vehicles travelled on the ferries of which 275,000 were HGVs. We anticipate an uplift in vehicular traffic as people get used to their freedom to travel to and from the mainland at any hour of the day. The Yarmouth-Lymington ferry should stay so that may offset the uplift slightly. It is envisaged the tunnel company would seek to amalgamate the West Wight ferry and the East Wight Tunnel in to the same business. The present average daily crossing volume is approximately 5,700 vehicles. These numbers are set to at least double or triple once economy of tolls and ease of access is established. These figures have included an approximate two fold increase in usage from the present day which is 11,700 vehicular crossings over a 24 hour period as opposed to a total of 5 hours of surges each day associated with the ferry option. For a comparison of traffic flow, St Georges Way in Newport is a single contraflow road with an average of 19,000 vehicular movements per day. The toll prices quoted are 50% to 90% cheaper than the present day ferry fares.